

Chiromantia

(2013)

Music by Rachel Devorah Trapp

Text from palm readings of the three vocalists by Cat McGuire

for

Kayleigh Butcher – Mezzo-Soprano,
Maria Jacobi – Soprano,
Carrie Anne Winter – Soprano
Double Bass

Chiromantia (2013)

Identity is shaped by narrative. We define who we are by the stories we tell about ourselves: where we've come from, where (we think) we're going. The physical body is inextricably entwined with the narratives of identity. To tell the story of who we are, we pick out the features of our parents in the mirror and describe the circumstances of our physical scars to new lovers.

Palmistry is an ancient practice that bridges the relationship between the physical body and the stories that constitute one's self. Like Opera, Palmistry is an amalgamation of disciplines that centers on narratives of identity and the existential webs that are woven through time. While Opera, as a temporal medium, must contend with time as a chronological linear concept, Palmistry actively dispenses with the linearity of time.

Individually, the three vocalists--Kayleigh Butcher, Maria Jacobi, and Carrie Anne Winter--and I visited the Palmist Cat McGuire for hour-long readings here in Manhattan. Since identity is a personal experience, each vocalist is singing excerpted text from their own readings. They are--in a sense--singing a song of themselves.

The harmonic vocabulary of the piece is inspired by the Medieval hexachord system. Beginning in the 12th century, vocalists learned these hexachords with the help of a mnemonic that used locations on the human hand to represent the solfege system. The Guidonian Hand, as it is now known, links the corporeal with notation: the hand, like Palmistry, mines the physiology of our hands for meaning. Each of the three hexachords of the medieval system is passed between each of the three singers in each of the three movements.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Cat McGuire, who graciously and generously devoted her time, energy, and skill to this collaboration, and to Kayleigh, Maria, and Carrie Anne, who have wholly dedicated themselves to both the sound and idea of the piece.

-RDT

Notes:

- Choreography directions are indicated with this * symbol and italics.
- An image of a hand will be projected above the performers and stand lamps will be lit.
- The score is intended to be read with stopwatches synched between all performers.
- The time stamps are intended to be used as approximate durations. In the first and third movements, the performers should use their ears and best judgment to transition between time-block sections.

Chiromantia

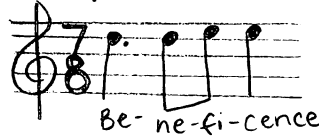
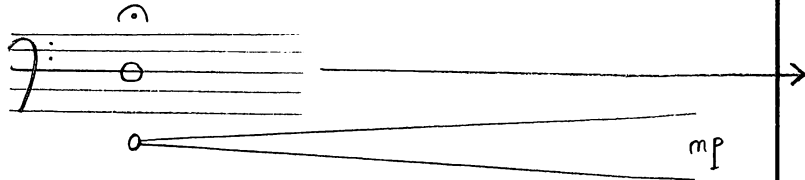
I. Past

keep your left hand raised for the duration of the movement

0:00

0:30

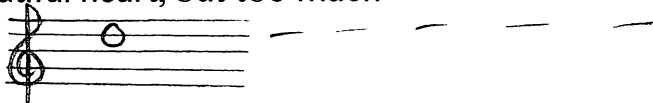
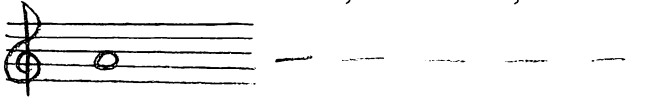
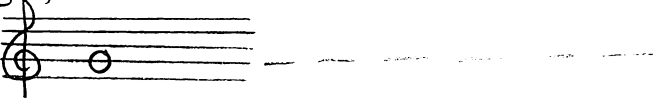
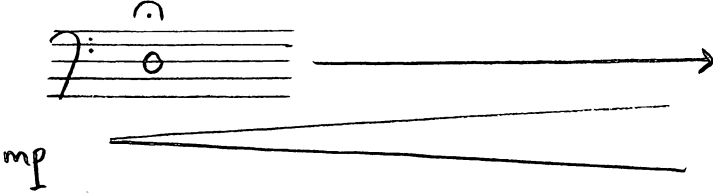
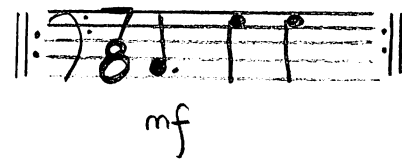
1:30

Soprano 1 (Maria)	Silence	Intermittently sing this gesture mezzo piano at approximately $\text{♩} = 80$: 
Soprano 2 (CarrieAnne)	From silence, gradually whisper the words below at your own pace leaving gaps between iterations. “the left hand is lofty above it all”	Continue whispering the same phrase with no gaps at a piano dynamic level.
Mezzo-Soprano (Kayleigh)	From silence, gradually whisper the words below at your own pace leaving gaps between iterations. “your left hand is spirited, has heartiness, energy”	Continue whispering the same phrase at your own pace but with no gaps at a piano dynamic level.
Double Bass	Silence	

1:30

2:30

4:00

S1	Hum this note with one dynamic swell per breath. Feel free to leave gaps. Intermittently replace the hum with a word from the phrase below, or with the gesture (with the same word: "Beneficence") from 0:30-1:30. "Beautiful heart, but too much" 	Intone the words below on the same note, continuing leave gaps. "Came in as a victim, with pained energy" "Incarnated with less spirituality, more vulnerability" 
S2	Hum this note with one dynamic swell per breath. Feel free to leave gaps. Intermittently replace the hum with a word from the phrase below. "Came in above the riff-raff, observant, distant" 	Intone the words below on the same note, continuing to leave gaps. "Has the deeper hollow, is the more abstract person, more higher above" 
M-S	Hum this note with one dynamic swell per breath. Feel free to leave gaps. Intermittently replace the hum with a word from the phrase below. "Ability to be a good storyteller, incarnated with that gift, but haven't used it much" 	Intone the words below on the same note, continuing to leave gaps. "There's quite an animal instinct that you incarnated with - you can always draw on that" "Vibrant energy in you - you said 'Let's tone it down'" 
DB		Intermittently repeat this gesture as a loop at $\text{♩} = 80$: 

II. Present

**Lower your left hand
and keep your right hand raised
for the duration of the movement**

4:00

$\text{♩} = 160$
mf

Soprano

Be-ne-fi-cence Be-ne-fi-cence Be - ne-fi-cence Be - ne-fi-cence

Soprano

Mezzo-soprano

mp

You have e - -

4:00

$\text{♩} = 160$
legato
mf

Double Bass

The musical score is for a piece titled 'II. Present'. It features three vocal parts: Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, and Double Bass. The tempo is marked as 160 beats per minute (♩ = 160). The Soprano part has a melody with lyrics 'Be-ne-fi-cence' repeated four times. The Mezzo-soprano part has a long note with lyrics 'You have e - -'. The Double Bass part has a bass line with lyrics 'You have e - -'. The score includes performance instructions such as 'Lower your left hand and keep your right hand raised for the duration of the movement' and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'mp'. There are two '4:00' time markers.

8

S.

S.

M-S.

Db.

mf

mf

mp

volved quite a bit salt of the earth salt of the earth

[Hum and take hurried breaths when necessary]

14

legato
mf *f*

S. The right hand is us in be - com - - - ing

S.

M-S. *mf*
salt of the earth salt of the earth salt of the earth salt of the earth

Play harmonics slightly after downbeats in each measure.

Db. sul D sul D sul D sul G sul G sul G
legato

21 5:00

S. *mf* Serv - - - - ice

S. *f* As you get in the game more it ri-les you up more *f* ri-les you up

M-S. *mf* This e-mo

Db. *tenuto*

26 *legato*

S. *f* For pro - tec - - - - tion

S. *f* You have not left your core self

M-S. *mf* tion you came with was not ver - y con-trolled This e mo-

Db. *f*

30

S. *mf* Con - nect - ed to spir - it

S. *mf* in stead of jet - ti-son-ing or mut-ing it

M-S. *f* tion you came with was not ver - y con-trolled on the con tin - u - um of

Db.

34

S. *f* For pro - tec - tion

S. *f* you have giv-en your - self per-mis-sion to take on new parts of your-self

M-S. *f* sex-u-al - i - ty is cre - a - tiv - i ty salt of the earth

Db. *f marcato*

38

ff 6:30 *accelerando*

S. — You have a - lot of pa - tience

ff *accelerando*

S. but still be in-tune with your core There are these wor - ry lines, flut-ter - y fidg-et - y li - nes flut-ter - y

accelerando

M-S. cre a - tiv-i - ty 6:30 *accelerando*

Db. *accelerando*

43

a tempo

S. — Ev - ery-thing has it's good and it's shad - ow side Your win-ning-est

a tempo

S. fidg-et - y li - nes flut-ter - y lines Ev - ery-thing has it's good and it's shad-ow side Your win-ning-est

a tempo

M-S. — has it's good shad-ow side

a tempo

Db. —

51 $\text{♩} = 120$ *f espress.*

S. *trait* [Hum] 

With your left hand, point at the places on your right hand indicated in the picture

S. *ritardando* *f espress.* [Hum] 

trait can be your a chil - les heel

With your left hand, point at the places on your right hand indicated in the picture

M-S. *f espress.* [Hum] 

Db. $\text{♩} = 120$ 4

Beat this pattern on the body of your instrument, with the C representing your dominant hand, and the D the other.

58

S.

S.

M-S.

Db.

8

12

The musical score consists of four staves. The first three staves (S., S., M-S.) are in treble clef, and the fourth staff (Db.) is in bass clef. The score begins at measure 58. The first two staves (S.) contain a series of notes with slurs and hand-drawn icons of hands pointing to specific notes. The third staff (M-S.) contains a series of notes with slurs and hand-drawn icons of hands pointing to specific notes. The fourth staff (Db.) contains a series of notes with slurs and hand-drawn icons of hands pointing to specific notes. The Db. staff has measure numbers 8 and 12 above it.

67

S. *mp* Ah 8:00

S. *mp* Ah

M-S. *mp* Ah

16 20

Db.

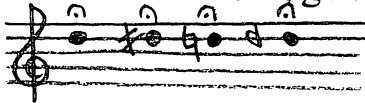
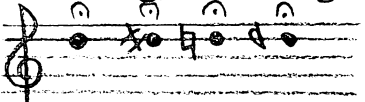
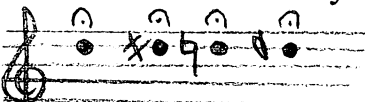
III. Future

place your palms over your eyes for the duration of the movement

8:00

11:00

12:00

S1	Slowly intone the words below gradually shifting to and from D5 by quarter-tones mezzo-piano. "A beautiful life ahead, go ahead and be bold" ex. 	When you can no longer hear the double bass, whisper the phrase of the previous section for approximately one minute, fading to silence.
S 2	Slowly intone the words below gradually shifting to and from D5 by quarter-tones mezzo-piano. "Moving more and more towards 'I want to do my own thing, I want to go my own path'" ex. 	When you can no longer hear the double bass, whisper the phrase of the previous section for approximately one minute, fading to silence.
M-S	Slowly intone the words below gradually shifting to and from D5 by quarter-tones mezzo-piano. "Utilize breath work in any way you can" ex. 	When you can no longer hear the double bass, whisper the phrase of the previous section for approximately one minute, fading to silence.
DB	Repeat gesture as a loop, begin at $\text{♩} = 120$ but gradually ritardando to $\text{♩} = 80$ <i>Sempre sul D</i>  <i>decrescendo al niente...</i>	Silence